

HANDOUT 3-2

Actions to be Taken by the Unit

Secure the Site

Upon completion of rescue and medical assistance, the scene must be secured by Forest Service law enforcement officers until released by the accident investigation team. Methods to secure the site:

- Ropes
- Signs
- Barrier tape
- Flashing lights
- Cones
- Posted guards

Do not move equipment, shelters, or any other items at the scene. Do not walk around the scene unless it's necessary for rescue or medical assistance. Nothing should be removed from the scene without permission from the accident investigation team leader or chief investigator/QTI. Evidence must be preserved at the scene. Photograph the scene (video or stills) if evidence could be lost before the accident investigation team arrives, such as by a rainstorm, washing away ruts or fluid spills.

Autopsies

Request an autopsy for all fatalities. Offer to pay for the autopsy if funding is an issue. Ask your local LEO to provide a liaison to the county medical examiner or coroner. Access to emergency (911) logs and police reports may be needed.

In case of a fire-related fatality: immediately provide the county medical examiner or coroner with a copy of the FA-156 *Firefighter Autopsy Protocol*.

Employee Assistance Program

DO NOT provide critical incident stress counseling or debriefings to witnesses and co-workers before the arrival of the accident investigation team unless there is some critical need to do so. If that is the case, contact the team leader and explain the need for this action.

Witness Statements

Gather witnesses for accident investigation team interviews. If that is not possible and witnesses need to be released, have them write, date, and sign a statement before they leave. Use the following procedures.

Separate witnesses and have them write statements in their own words. Witness statements should be in the witness' own handwriting or typed by them on a computer. The witness statement should include:

- Name, work address, and phone number of the witness
- What attracted the witness' attention to the accident
- What actions the witness took at the accident site
- Description of what happened
- Time and location of the events
- Environment (weather, lighting, temperature, noise, and so forth)
- Positions of people, equipment, and material, as well as the witness
- What has been moved, repositioned, turned off or on, or taken from scene
- Description of the sequence of events leading to accident
- Other witnesses or involved people (include names if known)

Accident Investigation Team Administrative Support

The investigation team will need the following:

- Investigation team local unit liaison including phone numbers and fax numbers.
- Lodging/meeting place for the investigation team (including private interview room). Coordinate with the team leader.
- Office supplies (including flip charts, markers).
- Documentation support (at the discretion of team leader)
 - Shredder
 - Fax
 - Computers
 - Printer
 - Vehicles
 - Speaker phones
 - Copier

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HANDOUT 3-2

Actions to be Taken by the Unit *(continued)*

Evidence Collection

Collect all or as much of the following applicable items as possible:

- Radio logs (written and recorded)
- Dispatch logs
- Occupant emergency plans
- Maps
- Job hazard analyses
- Safety briefings
- Team briefings
- Employee training records
- Medical examination records
- Work capacity test results
- Qualifications/certifications (including red cards)
- Work/rest (timesheets) for at least two pay periods (current and before the accident)
- Recent fire assignments
- Equipment maintenance records
- Equipment performance tests
- Inspection documents
- Fire management plan
- RAWS (remote automated weather system information)
- Weather (forecast/conditions)
- Fire behavior
- Incident action plans/personnel lists
- Delegation of authority
- MOUs/agreements
- Specs/drawings
- Press releases
- Autopsy/toxicology report
- Death certificate
- 911 Log
- Witness statements
- Internal policies/guidelines
- Tailgate safety session documentation
- Unit's safety plan

Contacts

Designate someone to provide the following:

- Family liaison—The purpose of the family liaison is to maintain open lines of communication between the Forest Service and the family. The liaison will provide the family support, assistance, and information during the crisis situation.
- PAO—If there is significant media interest, contact the regional PAO for assistance.